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Cambio de Colores – Change of Colors – Latinos in Missouri
Everyone Together – *Todos Juntos*

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Integration and Inclusion of the Latino student and their parents

The Urgency of a New School

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Last year, when we talked about "the Magic of the Multicultural Classroom", we worked on the concept of Content Integration, so all members of the classroom will feel part of the school and the community, and that their beliefs, values, languages, personal characteristics and needs will be considered. We discussed the need to be updated on Diversity, Multicultural and Integration, by school officials, supervisors, coordinators and lawmakers from the State of Missouri. We also talked about the components of "multicultural"… we referred to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual preferences, skills, needs, differences and similarities, traditions, languages, etc.

This year with the motto "Everyone together…" I want to add the idea of "Inclusion" and to work as a group in order to understand what we need to do in the classrooms, the school, the community and the State of Missouri for Inclusion and Integration to be a reality and not merely a nice piece of rhetoric. We do not want Integration and Inclusion to be a good but forgotten part of the Declaration of Rights of our Children and Young people.

It will be important that we, "everyone together" promote and contribute to enforce all of the laws, and not only some of them. By leaving some people out, we produce a mediocre education… we cannot think in perfect situations with just some and not all students.

We need to work "all together" so each one of our children and young people from Missouri will be healthy, safe, will have the pleasure of learning at school, so they can make an important valuable contribution to the community, with skills that will build-up their self-esteem and will help them to be successful in life.

Inclusive Education

"Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth, and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion" (UNESCO Review).

The principle of inclusive education was adopted at the World Conference on Special Needs Education: Access and Quality (Salamanca, Spain, 1994) and was restated at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000). The idea of inclusion is further supported by the UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities proclaiming participation and equality for all.

Let's analyze the three characteristics that are used today in many countries of the world: Segregation, Integration, and Inclusion.

Many times we use integration and inclusion as synonymous. It is important to have a perfect understanding of both so we may work accordingly.

We refer to local, social or functional integration when we have some special unit on the same site as mainstream schools and all children can familiarize themselves with each other. Children with special needs can use the same playground, cafeteria and assembly. Also when there are careful programs we can have in mind that everybody will participate.

All forms of integration assume some form of assimilation of the children with special needs into the mainstream school largely unchanged. There were certain conditions to keep the children together, and that was if the children from the mainstream school were not disrupted by the other children. If so, the student will be segregated with a special teacher at school. Still the needs of the child to be part of the community and local organizations were often ignored.

Inclusion, on the other hand, is about the right to belong to their local mainstream school, to be valued for who they are and be provided with all the support they need to thrive in that same mainstream school. Since the schools are not prepared in this way, it requires planning and commitment from the whole staff, school district, governors, government officials, parents and children to include the full diversity of children in the neighborhood.

Inclusive education is a developmental approach seeking to address the learning needs of all children, youth and adults with a specific focus on those who are vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion.

* See table 1 to compare the three concepts: Segregation, Integration and Inclusion. Let's have experience #1.

One important thing is to recognize that we used to place students in segregated or different schools following the "medical model", because of their psychological differences or needs, medical differences or needs, languages differences or needs, etc. Each one of the differences or needs will be "a problem", impairment or a barrier to the child.

A school that wants to become "inclusive" will need to receive the students with the "social model approach" and needs to identify the barriers within the school's environment, various strategies, organization and professional development to offer a full participation of all the children that naturally, because of our history of segregation in schools, are suffering the oppression of being different; of presenting the school and the community different needs; of having a different language and different ways of solving problems.

An inclusive school should have everybody on board - children and parents, faculty and professionals… we are talking about preparing ourselves for quality education. Every child has the right to be in ordinary classes, with support for their needs. Our children need to be prepared for life in the community… so inclusion is good for everybody.

Table 1 -

SEGREGATION	INTEGRATION	INCLUSION
(Tends to emphasize)	(Tends to emphasize)	(Tends to emphasize)
Services to Disabled People	Needs of Disabled People	Rights of Disabled People
Categorizing Disabled People	Changing Disabled People	Changing schools / colleges / organizations
'Special' / different treatment	Equal treatment	Equality - each receives support they need to thrive & achieve their potential
Disability is a problem to be fixed (in a special place)	Disability is a problem to be fixed	Everyone has gifts to bring
Services available in segregated setting	Benefits to disabled person of being integrated	Benefits to everyone, including all
Professional/experts	Professional/experts	Political struggle, friends & support
'Special' therapies	Technique	Power of ordinary experience
Categorization & marginalization	Learning helplessness	Assertiveness
Competition for parts of Disabled Person	Technical Interventions	Transforming power of relationship
Stress on inputs	Stress on process	Stress on outcomes; have a dream
Separate curriculum	Curriculum delivery	Curriculum content
Integration 'for some' is not desirable	Integration can be delivered	Inclusion must be struggled for

Activity #1 – Let's think in a group… these three alternatives and a Latino student who has just arrived in the USA, he/she coming from 3rd grade in a Hispanic country. Explain how these three schools will act, where they will send the student and what kind of activities the student will have.

Rieser and Mason (1992, p. 15) have contrasted the medical and the social models and have shown the implications for schools of each way of thinking. **This is illustrated in Table 2. Let's have experience #2.**

Table 2. Comparing the medical and social models

Medical model	Social model
• Child is faulty	• Child is valued
• Diagnosis	• Strengths and needs defined by self and others
• Labelling	• Identify barriers and develop solutions
• Impairment becomes focus of attention	• Outcomes-based programs designed
• Assessment, monitoring	• Resources made available
• Segregation and alternative services	• Training for parents and professionals
• Ordinary needs put on hold	• Relationships nurtured
• Re-entry if 'normal' enough or permanent exclusion	• Diversity welcomed; child is welcomed
• Society remains unchanged	• Society evolves

From: Rieser (2001, p. 139).

Rieser and Mason focus on attitudes and responses to disability. But their analysis could be applied to many groups of young people who find themselves marginalized in learning situations. Exclusion can be based on a range of factors. Several researchers, all over the world, have found and documented all kind of exclusions: racial, social, educational (ways of learning, language differences, etc), economic, etc.

Activity # 2 – We have a Hispanic student coming from a 5th grade in his country, he/she doesn't speak English nor does he/she hear well. He/she has a mild hearing problem. Where do we place the student? Is the school prepared?

A broader view of inclusion

Today we have several definitions of "inclusion" and/or "inclusive education". Those definitions cover students with disability and go to a broader view including students from minority ethnic or linguistic groups, from economically disadvantaged homes, or who are frequently absent or at risk of exclusion. It doesn't matter the philosophy or way of thinking, UNESCO's definition includes *all* children – whatever their ability, gender, language, ethnic or cultural origin – can be valued equally, treated with respect and provided with real learning opportunities. Inclusive education is about participation and equal opportunity for all – in other words, "full membership" of school and, later, society. Such a view of inclusion presents a challenge to existing structures and systems that have themselves contributed to the barriers that learners experience.

Inclusion requires the transformation of learning contexts. It's not easy. But it is moral. It is a right. It is our obligation.

We need to offer a flexible curricula, recording and reporting of students' achievements, leadership for the coordination of faculty, staff, students, parents and community, sport and leisure recreational opportunities. There are four basic components that any school has to consider for successful inclusion:

1) **Staff and professional development**
2) **Adapting instruction and curricula**
3) **Adequate resources**
4) **Positive attitudes**

Latino students. ESL classes.

1) Staff and Professional Development: The most crucial component.

Some years ago at St. Louis Community College and with the sponsorship of the Child Day Care Association of St. Louis, ESL Professor Diane Pascoe and I conducted the workshop "What do I do? My student doesn't speak English". We were prepared for 20-30 people, and 250 people were enrolled in it. We had to divide it in several sessions. Many teachers attending the workshop had for the first time non-English and/or limited-English students in their classrooms. Their problem? Why was there a massive concurrence? The teachers felt unprepared and recognized that they were afraid to receive the children, and soon they were reacting with anger and frustration.

The importance of teacher training and qualifications in determining and organizing their classes, is basic to student success in any kind of educational proposal. In the case of ESL students in an inclusive model, it will be the grade-level teacher who will spend the most time with the students in the classroom.

The following is an extract of the American Language Review, Volume IV, # 1.

Spokane Public Schools, from Washington State, started with the system in 1999. They had the following motto:

- *All students can achieve high standards, given significant time and support.*
- *All teachers can teach to high standards, given the right conditions and assistance*
- *High expectations and early intervention are essential.*
- *Teachers need to learn all the time, and they need to be able to articulate both what they do and why they do it."*

Recognizing the need for faculty and staff development, they hired a full-time ESL facilitator during the first year of the inclusion model, and a second facilitator the next year. The facilitators' primary role is to offer training to teachers and support staff through in-services, one-on-one, or small group consultations. For staff development to succeed, training must be offered at a variety of times in a variety of settings. Although the target audience is grade-level teachers, all staff should be encouraged to attend, including school psychologists, speech language pathologists, counselors, tutors, etc. Offering college credit or clock hours, which impact salary and certification, is essential in providing an incentive for staff to attend.

In Spokane Public Schools, four foundational areas for training are offered: Second Language Acquisition, Instructional Strategies, Modifying the Curriculum, and the Effects of the First Language and Culture on Learning. All four in-services focus on practical connections and applications to curriculum and the classroom. Teachers will understand "Why is this child so quiet?" or "Why does this child speak English so well, but can't read or write?" Once teachers understand that non-English speakers will begin developing social language first, and this language will be primarily aural/oral, expectations can be adjusted to focus on language development rather than grade-level objectives.

Staff development opportunities and topics continue to evolve. Educators, accepting all students in their schools, will view English language learners, not as deficient in English, but rather as children who are capable of learning another language and succeeding in school.

2) Adapting instruction and curricula

It is also of great importance that the curricula be flexible so teachers will be able to facilitate learning and will feel comfortable in doing it.

We know that all people are different, but we still organize our teaching expecting that all children will learn the same things, at the same time, with the same method. We are talking about all children. So the curriculum should take in consideration the various needs of all the students.

"Schools should be assisted in modifying subject matters and working methods, and that this should be linked to the appropriate training in skills. Great importance should also be attached to the allocation of resources in response to actual needs". (UNESCO Education Publication – Inclusive Education, 2004).

Modifying the Curriculum presents a great controversy among teachers, even though, teachers adjust it constantly, in order to meet the students needs. Having teachers think and become aware of the relevancy of these modifications, will help them have a better understanding for assessing language errors.

We, as educators, all study that our program, our syllabus has to respond to the needs and characteristics of the group. How many of us prepare, present and keep the syllabus that was prepared before we even knew how many students we will have, their characteristics, etc… And how many of us will continue with the same syllabus for years?

As parent, teacher, tutor… what concerns you the most about education in our community? What do you want for your child's education? What are the students' greatest challenges? What do you feel needs to change the most? What do students need in order to become prepared for life?

When we talk about diversity we usually mean different or variety. How do we create an effective learning environment, how do we celebrate the uniqueness of the students and create a learning environment that is inclusive and non-judgmental? The first step is to get in touch with our own stereotypes and biases about different. There is no "good stereotype". Also those so called "good stereotypes" can have a very negative impact on a child. Let's talk about some stereotypes that we have. It's important to remember that being a member of an underrepresented group does not guarantee immunity to biases and stereotypical beliefs about others (L. Billings-Harris, 2006).

As an educator, I believe that we really need to learn how to study, how to acquire knowledge, how to identify and recognize the barriers of learning and how to overcome them with tools and strategies that students can use themselves.

L. Ron Hubbard, a researcher and educator, developed a method called Study Technology, which means "the exact methodology to study any given subject". From his research he established three basic barriers to learning: 1) The lack of mass 2) Skip a gradient 3) The misunderstood word.

Let's do an exercise. Let's draw a picture of a house. Add a tree. Add a flower or two. Now add a dub. D-U-B.

What happened? What happened with your picture?

Having a misunderstood word is a barrier to learning and study. A word can be misunderstood in different ways. It could be you that had no definition. Maybe you have a wrong or incomplete definition. And… what happened to you? What did you feel?

In front of a misunderstood word the students go **blank**, they will start getting **physically tired, yawning, drained**… and feeling like they are **not there**, **day dreaming**, can't seem to focus or pay attention… **anxiety** can be seen as well. You know that horrible terror before a test some students get as an example… they really **suffer**… look at this picture (show picture of a child at school).

What is the solution? Many times we just tell the students to study harder, to work harder, to do it one more time over and over… but without the right tools or explanations, you will not have a successful learning. If you were teaching me how to drive and I make a mistake… you will not say do it again, drive harder!

With the misunderstood word one of the solutions is to clear the word… it means to define the word, to get the various definitions from the dictionary, use them in different sentences and then continue.

Look at the following pictures. Do you have these reactions from your students?

Reactions to the three barriers can be seen at the hand-out called: barriers. Courtesy of Applied Scholastics International.

11

In a classroom we can use drills as a method of including everybody… for example: We are in a Social Science class… we are talking about the Lewis & Clark Expedition. For the Hispanic student that has just entered a school in the U.S.A. that expedition doesn't mean anything. We read… he understands (maybe) just a little bit… A movie and pictures will help. Those resources give the students (not only to the Hispanic student) the mass which is the interpretation of the real thing (it's just like studying computers without knowing a computer… we need the mass… we need the computer, or a picture, or a movie, or a representation of it). After that, we can have a chart with the characteristics of the expedition, the biography of Lewis and Clark… it doesn't matter what we want to teach… the method is good for all areas. So we have questions and answers… each one of the students should ask of others. The power of a drill is tremendous. Later we can talk about and show a video of an expedition that happened in the Hispanic student's home country and we can analyze the differences and similarities… when we do this we are also adding Latin American history, geography, culture, etc. to our program.

With lack of mass the student may experience several physical reactions.

The teacher needs to take time to clear words with this particular student… The instructor will not be able to do it if he/she is not trained. It's like when we are following an instruction manual and we skip some pages. It will never have a good ending.

Let's look the following pictures.

3) Adequate resources

It will depend on the various districts, school buildings, etc. and… of course… effective training.

Look the following pictures:

4) Positive attitudes

We know that good teachers… care for their students. But sometimes the view of "one-size fits all" is an ineffective approach. The students "feel" the teachers care for them when they perceive a community, listening, commitment, trust, and personal connection (Rubén Garza – Teachers of Colors, October 2006).

When Latino students or other students are subjected to daily negative educational episodes… their reaction will be interpreted as unmotivated, having a behavior problem, and of course an unhealthy relationship is established with the teacher or teachers. The low achievement and high drop-out rates of Latino students are critical and educators should sense the urgency of the situation (Pizarro, 2005). It's important to listen to the students too.

Once we create a culture of learning that values relationships with students (Erin, 2003) the environment is more likely to promote positive interactions.

When teachers operate from the ethic of care, they are consciously making a moral commitment to care for their students. (Pang, 2005).

How can we facilitate positive relationships for our Latino students?

1) **Provide assistance in the classroom**. We need to address individual needs during the class period, instead of being constantly focused on the lesson established in the curriculum. It is very important to consider the students' body language… those are signals of the different barriers to learning.

2) **Offer academic support in the classroom setting**. Caring for younger siblings, working to support the family after school, and attending to other responsibilities are a few reasons that may prevent students from submitting class work on time. The teacher has to be flexible enough to provide time limits so the student will be able to be successful. (Garza, 2006).

3) **Show personal interest in the student's well being inside and outside the classroom.**

4) **Be available to the student with a kind disposition.**

5) **Be an active learner.**

6) **Promote student self-esteem**

7) **Demonstrate respect toward students.**

When Dr. Rubén Garza refers to Latino high school students he says "Caring for Latino students can certainly be improved through culturally responsive ways. In doing so we can then begin to adequately address the needs of Latino adolescents, build self-esteem, avoid negative stereotypes, and provide a better schooling experience for them."

Let's think on the following message:

Some years ago… in Seattle

During the so called Special Olympics
Nine participants with different special needs, decided
To run the 100 meters

At the signal they started to run… not in perfect formation
But with the desire to give their best
To finish and to win the trophy.

All but one… who fell down and started to cry.

When the other eight heard the crying
They slowly stopped, looked at their peer and
All of them went back to where he was.

One of the girls with Down's syndrome, kissed him and said
"now you are going to win… let's go"

And the nine of them, hand by hand, all walked together to the finish line.

Everybody started to applaud… everybody started to cry…
It was very emotional

Why?
Because the true meaning of our life is that
EVERYONE TOGETHER WINS… not on individual basis…
but as a group… as a community

We hope we can stop, look back and even if we have to change our route,
we will be there for that person that needs us.

Because we know that in the end what is more important is not to win
But to help others to win…

Í believe we need to stop… a little bit…
look back … and even change our route if necessary
Let's work everyone together… ¡Todos juntos!!!

Keep the project in your heart… and bring it out when somebody needs you.

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